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24 MS. WILSON: Good afternoon. I'm Mary  
25 Wilson, Vice Chairman of the Pahrump Town Board, and

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1 while I'm speaking to you as a member of that board,  
2 I'm not necessarily speaking for all of the other  
3 members.

4 I'm also the liaison to the Pahrump Nuclear  
5 Waste and Environmental Advisory Board, which is made  
6 up of scientists with over 100 combined years of  
7 experience in the nuclear field, including a nuclear  
8 engineer, nuclear physicist, nuclear health physicist,  
9 as well as two experts in environmental issues.

10 I'd like to thank the Department of Energy  
11 for this opportunity to voice our opinions. I've  
12 brought these concerns to DOE's attention before. But  
13 I feel it's worth a second attempt. Maybe this time we  
14 will get more action.

15 In the past, I have asked DOE and its  
16 contractors to not be blinded by the lights of  
17 Las Vegas. Unfortunately, I've not yet seen any real  
18 improvement in their basic economic policy. Yucca  
19 Mountain, as well as the Nevada test site, is located

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330050

20 in Nye County. It is the communities of my county that  
21 will have to assume the liabilities of Yucca Mountain,  
22 if selected. Yet, it is Las Vegas that reaps an  
23 overwhelming majority of the financial benefits.  
24 Pahrump. Amargosa Valley. Beatty. Tonopah.  
25 Goldfield. Mercury. They are all much more affected  
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1 by Yucca Mountain than is Las Vegas. And they are the  
2 ones that will suffer in the event of a disaster at  
3 Yucca Mountain.

4 There has already been a serious impact on  
5 Nye County and its communities on the economic front.  
6 A year and a half ago, I was assured by DOE officials  
7 that Nye County communities would be given  
8 consideration in the form of support contracts.  
9 However, there has been little or no progress on this  
10 front. We don't expect to be given every contract, but  
11 we can offer a number of services through our local  
12 businesses. Instead, they're contracted out to  
13 Las Vegas, and usually at a higher rate than they would  
14 have paid locally.

15 For example, DOE bought a large number of  
16 tires from a dealer in Las Vegas. Yet, Pahrump has

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330050

17 that same outlet right here. Why can't DOE use our  
18 local outlet and save all those transportation costs?  
19 This is not a fiscally responsible use of taxpayer  
20 monies. If we are unable to provide a service, then it  
21 makes sense to go farther afield. But we can fulfill  
22 those contracts just as efficiently as Las Vegas, and  
23 at a much more economical cost.

24 I would also ask DOE to revisit its policy of  
25 dealing only with state or county governments. The  
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1 people live in the individual communities within those  
2 entities. While DOE compensates the state and  
3 counties, often that compensation does not reach the  
4 affected communities to the degree that it should.

5 For example, DOE should negotiate directly  
6 with the individual communities for the PET funds.  
7 That way DOE can be assured that affected communities  
8 are receiving the funds intended for them.

9 So once again, I urge you to work with the  
10 communities in Nye County. Please, stop overlooking us  
11 simply because we don't have the influential people,  
12 money or power to get the political attention we  
13 deserve.

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**330050**

14 Another issue that the Pahrump nuke board has  
15 commented on in the past was addressed in their  
16 response to the EIS. Their conclusion, which was  
17 adopted by the Pahrump Town Board, was that much more  
18 work needed to be done on the water study. There is a  
19 need for an ongoing study of water migration and a  
20 permanent sampling and monitoring program with the  
21 commitment to mitigate any problem and ensure that no  
22 member of the public is ever at risk. DOE is still too  
23 far away from tangible results in this area to warrant  
24 any intelligent conclusion. Any danger to the water  
25 table affects Amargosa Valley, and this needs to be  
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1 addressed to protect those residents.

2 Another area of concern is that of cask  
3 testing. Yes, DOE has impressed us all with how much  
4 these casks can withstand, but they have failed to test  
5 these casks to the breaking point. It's not enough to  
6 say these casks can stand up to this or that. DOE must  
7 assure people that they have done their job thoroughly  
8 by finding out just what that limit really is.

9 And using the excuse that they have tested  
10 according to logical scenarios is unacceptable. Events

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**330050**

11 on September 11th proved once and for all that we don't  
12 live in a logical world. Please, test these casks to  
13 failure.

14 In line with that, the public must also be  
15 assured that the transportation of all hazardous  
16 materials, including nuclear waste, is protected from  
17 any type of terrorist attack. This includes assuring  
18 us that the drivers have been through a thorough  
19 background check, and have no ties that could put the  
20 public at risk.

21 As to using Yucca Mountain as a permanent  
22 storage facility, I believe DOE is missing the point on  
23 this as well. The political brouhaha has caused many  
24 of our politicians to draw lines in the sand, either  
25 pro or con. While those against this project hold  
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1 views that are commendable, they're hardly practical at  
2 this point in time. The billions of dollars already  
3 spent, and the lack of studying any other site,  
4 certainly points to Yucca Mountain as the probable  
5 choice. How else would DOE answer to the taxpayers if  
6 they left? "Oh, gosh, well, we thought it was a good  
7 idea. Sorry we spent billions of dollars for nothing."

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**330050**

8 I don't believe that DOE will leave, or that  
9 they can even afford to at this point. But rather than  
10 this big battle of pro and con, which often resembles  
11 just so much political posturing, why don't we again  
12 look to the practical? Personally, I don't want this  
13 next door to me. But if it's going to be forced on me,  
14 then I want a say in what happens. And I want  
15 compensation for the risks imposed on me, whether those  
16 risks are enormous or minuscule.

17 And I want DOE to stop putting all their eggs  
18 in the permanent storage basket. The scientists on the  
19 Pahrump nuke board believe that this facility could be  
20 used as a temporary storage facility. As time and  
21 technology advances, we believe that methods of  
22 recycling and transmutation will emerge, probably  
23 sooner rather than later. We already have some  
24 methods. The trick is to make these methods cost  
25 effective.

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1 To that end, more effort needs to be expended  
2 in research and development of recycling and  
3 transmutation and the recovery of valuable isotopes.  
4 Locking this waste away forever is as much a waste of

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330050

5 potential assets as it is a ridiculous and probably  
6 impossible task. I urge DOE to look more closely at  
7 this, and recommend UNLV as the logical leader for this  
8 study.

9 We ask that the emphasis on permanent storage  
10 as a first priority be replaced with the study of  
11 making this waste safe and reuseable. The second  
12 priority should be the construction of reprocessing and  
13 transmutation plants. Only as a third priority should  
14 Yucca Mountain be considered for permanent storage.

15 If Nevada is going to be the storage place,  
16 then Nevada needs to be in charge of the nuclear waste.  
17 We also recommend that Nevada receive a minimum  
18 surcharge on nuclear waste brought into the state of  
19 \$10 per pound. The state of Nevada and DOE should fund  
20 UNLV, among others, to do the research and build an  
21 accelerator facility at the Nevada test site utilizing  
22 reprocessed fuel.

23 The motto of an environmentally conscious  
24 society should be, reduce, reuse, recycle. We have  
25 made some of these suggestions before, and DOE has made

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1 a start. But they need to invest much more in this

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330050

2 area. Not only as a show of their good faith, but as a  
3 sign that the federal government can recognize when a  
4 strategy must change, and is nimble enough to change  
5 that strategy quickly.

6 Quickly means now. DOE has already been  
7 hearing about this for several years. They know  
8 recycling and transmutation is more prudent than  
9 permanent storage. So now is the time to show that  
10 they are actually listening.

11 Our first name is Pahrump, our middle name is  
12 Nevada, and our last name is the United States of  
13 America. We are your mothers and fathers, brothers and  
14 sisters. We are a part of your family, and we deserve  
15 to be treated with respect. We deserve to have our  
16 concerns heard, and we deserve to be answered with more  
17 than lip service. Thank you for your time.